crop during Rabi season is yet to commence and it is too early to assess the procurement and its price.

(e) The National Food Security Mission has been launched in 17 States of the country for enhancing production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10, 8 and 2 million tonnes, respectively by 2011-12. About 4.047 million ha. additional area is to be brought under pulses for increasing production.

Lesser price of jute in Assam

804. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of jute in Assam become lower;

(b) the steps proposed to give relief to the poor farmers, who are engaged in jute products in Assam; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to persuade to Ministries/Departments/Corporation to purchase jute to prevent the suffering of the jute growers in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Month-end wholesale price of Tossa Desi-5 variety of jute at Nagaon market in Assam which was Rs. 1800/- per quintal in May, 2006, declined in the subsequent months of the year 2006. However, in 2007, the prices of this variety in Assam got stabilized at a lower level ranging from Rs. 1200-Rs.1100 per quintal.

(b) and (c) Government fixes the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for TD-Grade 5 of Raw Jute (ex-Assam) annually on the basis of recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) to ensure that jute farmers in the country get remunerative prices for their produce. Such MSP for TD-Grade 5 of Raw Jute (ex-Assam) for 2008-09 has been fixed at Rs. 1250/- per quintal, which is higher than that for the previous year by Rs. 195/- per quintal. The Ministry of Textiles further fixes that MSP for other varieties of raw jute.

To protect the interest of jute growers in the country, the Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI) procures raw jute at the fixed MSP in the event of its market prices falling below MSP. The JCI also undertaken commercial purchases of jute from the markets, as and when required. The JCI purchased 2.11 lakh quintals of Raw Jute in 2006-07 and 1.60 lakh quintals in 2007-08 in Assam.

Demand to ban cow-slaughters

†805. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the heads of the National Muslim Forum, the Sikh Sant including the Hindu Society have demanded for putting a ban on the cow-slughters through the Central law in the conference on cow-slaughter held on the 7th November, 2007 in Delhi;

(b) whether they have demanded for a separate Ministry for promotion and care of cow, etc.;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government is considering their demands; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Agriculture has not received such an information.

(c) and (d) Questions do not arise.

Sowing of wheat and other foodgrains

†806. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that sowing of wheat and other foodgrains in the rabi crop during current year has been less as compared to earlier years;

(b) if so, the area in which wheat, paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane and cotton have been sown respectively;

(c) how much it is less as compared to earlier years' sowing in each case; and

(d) the means Government has decided to adopt to meet the shortfall in production as a result of less sowing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Table below presents the area coverage under wheat, paddy, coarse cereals and pulses during Rabi 2008 *vis-a-vis* those during Rabi 2007 and Rabi 2006:

(*Lakh hectares*)

Crop	Rabi 2008	Rabi 2007	Rabi 2006
Wheat	271.99	279.95	264.84
Paddy	40.93	42.12	43.25
Coarse Cereals	58.28	63.14	63.64
Pulses	116.10	125.16	117.12

(b) and (c) Table below presents the areas coverage (both Kharif and Rabi seasons) under wheat, paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane and cotton during the years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 alongwith their differences:

(*Lakh hectares*)

Crop	Areas Coverage			Difference	
1	2	3	4	5=(Col.2-Col.3)	6=Col.2-Col.4)
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06		
Wheat	271.99	279.95	264.84	-7.96	7.15
Paddy	437.01	438.14	436.60	-1.13	0.41
Oilseeds	268.42	265.13	278.63	3.29	-10.21

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.